

IDENTITY AND ALIENATION IN FRANZ KAFKA'S THE METAMORPHOSIS

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ABSTRACT

This research is designed to explore Franz Kafka's novel "The Metamorphosis" to analyze the general motifs of Gregor Samsa's role as the embodiment of alienation and the confusion of his identity. Thus, by scrutinizing Gregor's Change into an insect and its effects, the study reveals how Kafka responds to oppressive forces of society as well as families that, in turn, deform people's character and cause inner turmoil. Through the analysis of the life of Gregor Samsa as a person who desperately fights for his identity and his family that eventually rejects him, this paper identifies the vicious circle of identity loss and identity alienation. The existential, psychoanalytic, and sociocultural theories help a reader or audience to get a broader view of these concepts. How Kafka depicts the condition of Gregor is relevant to the modern debates on psychology, self-estimation and alienation of the individual. This paper adds valuable insights into Kafka's technique of telling a story and themes of his most enigmatic short work, 'The Metamorphosis,' reaffirming its significance to contemporary literary and cultural analysis.

.Keywords: The Metamorphosis, alienation, identity, Gregor Samsa, psychoanalytic and sociocultural theories

INTRODUCTION

Background of Franz Kafka and His Work

Franz Kafka is one of the most significant representatives of twentieth-century fiction whose stories and novels are complex reflections of existence and the individual's fight within the absurd and hostile world. Kafka was born in Prague in 1883; most of his works are characterized by loneliness, absurdity, and existential despair stemming from his personal life and the social and political reality of Central Europe at the beginning of the twentieth century (Nervi, 2020). Kafka's works involve stories of immense power that seem to suppress and enslave individuals, and petty bureaucratic systems that make people's lives unbearable and dehumanized; this explains why the phrase 'Kafkaesque' was coined to describe situations similar to Kafka's texts.

Among all Kafka's works, "The Metamorphosis" published in 1915 is regarded to be one of the

most famous and discussed works of the author. The novella starts with the main character, Gregor Samsa, waking up one day as what can be described as a monstrous bug. This rather perfunctory and unmotivated change is used to open up questions of character, isolation and the human condition – the more interesting area of discussion (Gray, 2018). Thus, the elements of surrealism and symbolism in "The Metamorphosis" are the points that invite critics to have numerous discussions on the topic because the novella by Kafka can be interpreted in different ways.

Overview of "The Metamorphosis"

"The Metamorphosis" opens with a stark and surreal scenario: A young man named Gregor Samsa who is a salesman by profession wakes up one day to find himself transformed into an enormous insect. This physical change is not

motivated or narrated which renders the reader to concentrate on the metaphorical and the themes of the novel. Thus, the struggle of the main character in accepting the changed reality is increasingly supplemented by the focus on the family's response to the new condition of Gregor. At first, his family is stunned and disgusted, but they attempt to nurse him and try to return him to health. However, over the years they do not tolerate it and their sympathy transforms into cruelty and indifference.

Situating Gregor Samsa's transformation and his family's subsequent rejection of him, the most fundamental motifs of the novel deal with identity and isolation. Regaining the human form was no longer an option for him which made him feel the social exclusion as he has become a monster. This novella examines the internal conflict of Gregor while struggling with his changed life and relations in his family (Bataille, 2019). Sacrifice and fragmentation of human identity are some of the topics that Kafka delivers through the story of Gregor.

Thesis Statement

This paper will specifically focus on the issues of identity and alienation in the novel "The Metamorphosis" by Franz Kafka to understand the depths of Kafka's portrayal of these subjects through the character of Gregor Samsa and through analysing the change in his interpersonal relations within the family unit. In this case, pattern-based analysis of the text will be applied to show how and in what way Kafka, who is the author of the novella, weaves the two concepts of identity and alienation through the selection of narrative techniques and symbols.

Research Objectives

1. To analyze how Gregor Samsa's transformation in "The Metamorphosis" reflects the struggle for identity in the face of dehumanization.
2. To explore the depiction of alienation in Kafka's "The Metamorphosis" and examine how it interacts with the concept of identity in the narrative.

Research Questions

1. How does Gregor Samsa's transformation in "The Metamorphosis" reflect the struggle for identity in the face of dehumanization?
2. In what ways does Kafka depict the theme of alienation, and how does it interact with the concept of identity in the narrative?

Significance of the Study

It is also important to extend such knowledge in the case of Kafka and his reflection of identity options and existential homelessness to talk about human existence and psychological battle. Based on the legacy of existentialism, many aspects of "The Metamorphosis" can be discussed in traditions of analyzing the main hero's efforts to remain an individual within an increasingly oppressive environment. Thus, the themes established by the study reveal Kafka's approach to the social and domestic regulation of persons and their relationships with oneself and others. Analyzing the newspaper as the means of communication that is used in the story, Kafka reveals Gregor's prejudice and alienation as a result of society's dehumanization, as well as identity crises and mental health issues that can be traced in present-day society. It will be important to discuss the kinship between Kafka's depiction of Gregor's life and death situation and the essential existential inquiries into human existence and placement in the world. Elaborating how vital Kafka's existential themes are to the modern world where presumed identity and belonging stifle people in every social and psychological aspect (Bloom, 2019). Moreover, this will serve as a new look at the topic, which in the case of the present study concerns the analysis of "The Metamorphosis" by Franz Kafka, through which the author reveals the dynamics of identity and isolation, thus promoting a better and deeper understanding of Kafka's narrative and thematic approaches, as well as contributing to this work's recognition as a true piece of the literature treasure, as well as supporting its relevance in the context.

Literature Review II

Previous Research on Kafka's Work

There exists a plethora of academic research focusing on Kafka's life and work due to the grave impact he had on the current literature. Studying Kafka's work is given in different disciplines of knowledge, starting with literary analysis and including psychoanalytic and existential philosophies as well as cultural studies. Kafka, for many years and in several works, left his recognizable narrative style that can be described as realistic fiction with features of surrealist art. This paper aims to examine how Kafka explores the struggle of an individual against the society in his major works including *The Trial*, *The Castle*, and *The Metamorphosis* a key theme in Kafka's work is that of where the protagonist is in an oppressive world that is indifferent to him (Bataille, 2019). It is possible to state that Kafka's protagonists are depicted as The main characters, who are often alienated, face the contemplation of existential questions and challenge bureaucratic nonsense, and that is why the phrase "Kafkaesque" generally describes the situations that are nightmarishly complicated, strange, or nonsensical.

There is no doubt that Kafka's narrative in his novels is rife with autobiography; this is even more specific when it comes to his difficult relationship with his father and, therefore, an exploration of the dead fathers and family structures in Kafka's works. For instance, Deleuze and Guattari (1986) in their study "Kafka: According to the essay "Toward a Minor Literature," Sara Van Den Berg is of the opinion that Kafka as a child had a very poor relationship with his father and a similar way the characters portrayed by him are oppressed by tyrannical systems. This biographical approach is also complemented by Kafka's text "Letter to His Father," where the influence of the father figure is embodied in Kafka's domineering excessive father figure and the effect he had on Kafka's psyche as well as his writing.

Another major branch of Kafka's scholarship has to do with his strategies in narrative and various matters of style. From the above passages and for most of Kafka's other works, Hoffmann observations can be made that the writer employs an almost clinical prose to depict bizarre and sometimes outrageous situations, which elicits

the requisite feeling of alienation in the readers and immense anxiety. This line of work establishes a tension between the mundane and the theatrical thus enriching the thematic preoccupations of his productions (Gray, 2018). Also, Kafka's rather unique approach to developing the form of a narrative and his conscious decision not to share certain information with the reader contributes to the existing theme of perplexity.

Critical Interpretations of "The Metamorphosis"

There is a great divergence as to the meaning of "The Metamorphosis", which is a sign of rich in portrayal and deep analysis. Some of the earlier commentators of the novella emphasized on the allegorical meaning of the work, most of them being in agreement that the transformation of Gregor Samsa is a representation of human isolation and the dehumanization of the masses in the modern society. For example, W. H. Auden (1962) had commented on "The Metamorphosis" as a "parable of the alienated man," and focusing on the existential solitariness of an individual in a world that offers no direction or meaning.

Sigmund Freud interpretations of the novel "The Metamorphosis" have also widely been used by scholars since this theory is also part of psychoanalytic criticism. Such readings center on the metaphorical meanings of the Samsa family's transformation and the psychic processes that underlie it – specifically, the Oedipal, sexual conflicts pervading Gregor's metamorphosis. Jorge Luis Borges in his essay "Kafka and His Precursors," 1952 also said that the people turn into the insect to represent desire and anxiety in the Samsa family's sexual sphere. In a similar fashion, Nina Pelikan Straus (1989) concluded that Gregor's insect transformation represented a castration complex and his penile amputation within the family dynamics.

From the existentialist perspective, banality of the abomination has concentrated on Kafka's depiction of the notion of the absurdity of life and man's futile attempt to find a meaning in this futile world. Interpreting such aspects of Kafka's work, scholars tend to refer to his works with the existential views of Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus. For instance, in "The Myth of Sisyphus", Camus (1942), still focused on Kafka's "The

Metamorphosis” and stated that Gregor was a symbol of humanity burdened with tasks that seemingly had no purpose. This existentialist view can also be supplemented by the examples of Kafka’s philosophical thinking as is evidenced by his diaries and letters where he constantly wrestles with the issue of existence and self and the world.

The post-structuralists and the Feminists have since applied their critique to “The Metamorphosis” thereby lending a new depth of understanding to Kafka’s techniques and themes. The post-modern criticism of Gilles Deleuze, and Félix Guattari (1986) has supported the text in terms of its anti-linearity and the deconstruction of subjectivity. From the Cultural Feminist perspective, other authors including Elizabeth Boa (1996) have also researched on how gender issues arise within the novella, whereby after the transformation of Gregor, he becomes a marginalized figure just like women, and how men control the family using their authority that is synonymous to the power of money.

Theoretical Framework on Identity and Alienation

When following the concept of identity and alienation in ‘The Metamorphosis,’ one has to relate it to existentialism, psychoanalysis and sociology. From the above theoretical perspectives, one can get a full view of the dynamics that exist between identity and alienation in Kafka’s novella.

The concept of existentialism with specific reference to Sartre and Heidegger is very important in matters concerning identity and alienation. The search for the meaning of life and death anxiety are the main principles of existentialism. Therefore, two concepts which lately concerning Gregor Samsa – are Sartre’s existential angst and Heidegger’s being-in-the-world (Dasein). Sartre (1943:28-29) categorically declares that people are condemned to freedom and that there is no core meaning to life for individuals to discover and thus people have to define their own nature and purpose by their individual actions. This viewpoint is also consistent with Gregor’s ability to regain his humanity since throughout the story the protagonist fails to be a self-individual both in the

family and society environment, grounded on the complete identity loss due to the transformation. Another perspective that can be effectively applied to the analysis of identity and alienation in “The Metamorphosis” is the psychoanalytic theory of Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan. Psychoanalysis heavily relies on the works of Freud and affective Lacan and serves as the key to understanding the processes which took place in the Saff’s and, more specifically, Gregor’s family, as well as the Freudian concepts such as the contents. The idea of self-formation through the psychic identification with the mirror image and through the Other’s gaze introduced by Lacan is also helpful for understanding Gregor’s self-perception and his alienation from his body as well as his family. Lacan also adds to the understanding of how communication and specifically the breakdown of communication play in Gregor’s isolation by focusing on the symbolic order.

Thus, applying sociocultural criticism based on Karl Marx, and Erich Fromm’s books, reader gets more general cinematizing understanding of such themes as identity and alienation in “The Metamorphosis.” Marxist analysis, especially the concept of alienation that could be observed in the early works of Marx speaks of dehumanizing character of capitalist environment and the reduction of man to an industrial commodity. Fromm (1941) takes this analysis further by investigating the psychological side of the alienation process in the modern society and shows how individuation is lost and how the feeling of powerlessness dominates the personality. These theoretical impressions offer a background to the socio-economic causes for Gregor’s alienation plus the nearly complete erasure of his persona.

Scholars continue to discuss the possibilities of analyzing and interpreting the novella since it has profound multilevel potential for interpretation relying on different critical approaches and theories. Past scholars have noted the life writing aspects of Kafka; the author’s stylistic strategies; and the plot and subject matters, isolation and self-realization. Scholars have ascribed different forms of criticism to Kafka’s work that include; allegorical and psychoanalytical criticism, existentialist and post-structural criticism with

each making different observations about Kafka's envisagement of the human condition.

The identity and alienation in "The Metamorphosis" are examined with the help of existential philosophy, psychoanalysis, and sociocultural approaches. These two viewpoints give a fair appreciation of the complex relationship between individuality and isolation in the novella. This paper seeks to understand how Kafka presents the above themes by analyzing how Gregor Samsa turns into a bug, and the consequent implications of this transformation on his self-identity and the relationships with his family members. In conclusion, this literature review confirms the importance of "The Metamorphosis" in literature and the continuous relevance of the novel in today's society on issues of identity, alienation and the general existence of humans.

Methodology III

This research utilizes a qualitative research method, specifically textual analysis, to analyse Franz Kafka's novella "The Metamorphosis". Textual analysis is a feasible method in analysing a literature as it offers an interpretative analysis of the literature which is very significant in analysing Kafka's texts. Applying this methodology, based on the imagery, symbols, and the narration techniques used by Kafka, made it possible to examine the existential and psychological context of the novella deeply and comprehensively.

Theoretical Framework

The research is grounded in three theoretical frameworks: are existentialism, psychoanalysis, and sociocultural criticism. These frameworks are useful in decoding the multiple layers in the text and Kafka's depiction of self and isolation.

Existentialism: Using the existentialist concepts of Jean-Paul Sartre and Martin Heidegger, the paper analyses the anamorphosis of Gregor Samsa and his desperate attempts to regain his identity as the framed portrayal of existential despair and meaninglessness of life. There is talk of "being-in-the-World and the need to seek for meaning in a world that appears not to have any concern for man.

Psychoanalysis: Freudian Psychoanalysis is utilized to examine the inner struggle and the psychological mechanisms that cause Gregor's estrangement in the story. Several Freudian and Lacanian theories can be applied toward understanding Gregor's psychological mindset as well as his interactions with his family members, and these include the theory of the uncanny and the concept of repression on one hand, as well as the mirror stage and the gaze of the other, on the other.

Sociocultural Criticism: Using the concepts of Karl Marx and Erich Fromm this framework focuses on the socio-economic context that forms Gregor's character and causes alienation. An aspect of Marx's theory of alienation under capitalist society is incorporated in the discussion in relation to Samsa's dehumanization due to work alongside Fromm's ideas regarding individuation and powerlessness as used to explain the social relations of the Samsa family.

Data Collection

The main types of data for this research are derived from the text of the novel "The Metamorphosis" by Franz Kafka. Bibliographical and background data are any other essays, articles, theories, and essential documents that serve as the background information of the analysis. Such sources go through a rigorous analysis to ensure the grounds on identification of the theme of Identity and alienation in the novella.

Data Analysis

The data analysis process involves a close reading of the text, with particular attention to the following elements: The data analysis process involves a close reading of the text, with particular attention to the following elements:

Character Analysis: Looking at aspects of Gregor Samsa character, Change and relation to other characters to describe the essence of identity and alienation.

Symbolism and Motifs: Explaining how significant and repeated symbols are used effectively by the author in the novella and

defining motifs; locked doors, picture of a woman in furs, types of food offered to Gregor.

Narrative Techniques: Discussing how Kaka's narrative employs elements of surrealism, symbols, and lack of an adequate reason for the transformation of Gregor.

Thematic Analysis: Discussing the important motifs of the whole story and the ways they are built and connected – identity and isolation. Following the existential, psychoanalytical, and sociocultural approaches to text analysis, this work offers the detailed and most importantly, the qualitative examination of identity and alienation in "The Metamorphosis". The choice of the approach also serves as a valuable contribution to the further development of methodological approaches to the analysis of Kafka's work in the context of the contemporary scholarly production.

Chapter IV

Analysis of Identity in "The Metamorphosis" Gregor Samsa's Transformation and Loss of Human Identity

Franz Kafka's "The Metamorphosis" opens with one of the most startling and iconic lines in literary history: Gregor Samsa, the protagonist of the work wakes from a bad dream as a monstrous insect of the night," (Kafka, 1915/2008, p. 1). This becomes not only a physical change but also a very radical intrusion of the process of turning Gregor into a bug insidious attack on his humanity. Gregor's initial reaction to his new form reflects a bewildering loss of self: Thus, the main character of the story wakes up and realizes: "What's happened to me, he thought. It was no dream". (Kafka, 1915/2008, p. 1). Despite the fact that he becomes an insect at the end of the novel, the reader sees how he almost loses himself in becoming an insect, meaning that the manner in which he accepts the change represents a challenge in retaining his human personality when transformed.

Thus, the main process illustrated in the novella is the transformation of Gregor into alienated and in human body as he progressively loses the ability to communicate with his family members. First, Gregor attempts to reason with his family; however, he is only able to produce the "high-

pitched, scream like squeak;" a sound the family cannot decipher (Kafka, 1915/2008, p 2). This powerlessness in speech also isolates him more because the little capacity he had to fend for himself and let it is known that he is Gregor, he is a member of this family is taken away from him. The fact that he can no longer speak reflects his losing humanity and losing connection with other people.

The metamorphosis also impacts the change of his self-image and personal value system in the life of Gregor. Being a hardworking man who used to financially support his family, Gregor is now an incapable and flat organism. He reflects on his predicament: "Was he an animal that music could so affect him? He felt as if the way to the unknown food he craved for was being revealed" (Kafka, 1915/2008, p. 22). This desire for attachment and empathy is the reason behind the internal conflict observing Gregor wishing for humane qualities, whilst having an insect body. The more he starts to turn into a non-human, the more he hangs on to the shreds of what is left of human inside him, although his family ignores and rejects him more and more.

The Role of Family in Shaping Gregor's Identity

However, the viewer realizes that Gregor's individuality is closely connected with his position within a family. In the pre-transformed and pre-sympathy Gregor, he is the sole economic provider of the family bread which shapes his identity and his family's perception of him. This is spectacularly demonstrated by his change of status which disrupts this dynamics, and shows just how precarious his identity is once his economic value is no longer needed. His family is outraged and in denial at first but they quickly become functional, even selfish in their desire to push forward with their lives.

His only sister, Grete, tries to assume the role of a caretaker to Gregor at the beginning, which indicates at least some family members' obligation and sympathy. However, as she grows older, her care transforms to bitterness, and the girl is neglected. This change of attitude becomes clear when Grete says "We have to try to get rid of it We've done everything humanly possible to look after it and to put up with it" (Kafka 1915/2008, 29). From a caring sister, she

becomes as a person who sees Gregor as an encumbrance 'it' The change symbolizes the families' regression from the human responsively and the distance the families put between Gregor erasing the remaining traces of humanity in him. The family's rejection reaches its climax when they decide that Gregor must go, seeing him not as a family member but as a pest: "I will not utter my brother's name in front of this monster, and so all I say is: we must try to get rid of it" (Kafka, 1915/2008, p. 31). Not only is the final refusal the confirmation of Gregor's isolation, but it also shows the disintegration of the family relationships that previously comprised his existence. The lack of relationships and all the family members' inability to recognize Gregor is anything more than a vermin shows that the family is deprived of depth of identity, which relies only on appearance and financial value.

Symbolism and Motifs Related to Identity

By analyzing the context of the locked door, Kafka enriches the elements of symbolism and motifs in the story of "The Metamorphosis." Gregor's isolation is physically manifested by the locked doors of his room, which symbolize the barriers between him and his family: "He was a tool of the boss, without brains or backbone. This is what he had gradually become" (Kafka 1915/2008 18). The doors are not only shut to keep Gregor locked down in his apartment but also the emotional doors shut down between Gregor's family members and himself; a sense of stēdness.

Another is the picture of the woman wearing furs which is hung on the wall of the Samsas' flat by Gregor. This picture symbolizes the Gregor's attempt to remain a human being and his deep-seated longing for some sort of beauty amidst the ugliness of his existence. Even as an insect, he tries to preserve this picture: "He hurried up onto the picture and pressed himself against its glass, it held him firmly and felt good on his hot belly" (Kafka, 1915/2008, p. 131). The act of preserving this picture is the attempt of Gregor to stay a human being in a process where he is becoming an utterly alienated subject.

Food is also used symbolically by Kafka, and it is in relation to this motif that the theme of identity comes up. This is because the process through which Gregor devolved into an insect-like

monster is manifested in his changing tastes and the Frank family's approach to feeding him. At first, his mother and his sister bring him different types of food, and in an act of negation of all his humanity he stops eating, noticing on the plates brought to him the indifference of his mother and his sister who eventually put in front of those left for him only what is the most comfortable for them. The way that it is provided and what kind of food Gregor eats indicate the increasing gap between the transformed bug and his basic human nature.

Exploration of Alienation

Gregor's Alienation from His Family and Society

Thus, the transformation of Gregor into an insect also symbolizes his isolation from his family and the society. The transformation symbolizes the alienation that Gregor was already experiencing because of his demanding work and his family's reliance on him. Thus, his physical change makes his family recognize the repulsive reality of their entanglement and utter emotional detachedness from him.

Right from the beginning of the novel, one can observe a clear element of alienation as the Samsa family responds to Gregory's new physical form. His father's initial reaction is one of hostility and violence: "His father clenched his fist with a hostile expression, as if to drive Gregor back into his room" (Kafka, 1915/2008, p. 10). This reaction remains in context with the primary emotions of Gregor's family – no compassion and no respect. Despite the fact that such a life is unbearable, instead of trying to comprehend and assist Gregor, his family members feel threatened and act hostile, therefore alienating him even more.

The isolation is hence in a way intensified by the social consequences of his transmutation. Gregor becomes a burden to his family, unable to find a job and provide for the family; thus, he is seen as useless in society, which prizes citizens based on their productivity. His manager's visit to his home and his dismissive attitude towards Gregor's situation highlight the dehumanizing aspects of capitalist society: "I hope it's nothing serious. Though on the other hand, I must say that we business people...often simply have to overcome a slight indisposition for business

reasons" (Kafka, 1915/2008, p. 7). This societal pressure together with the consequent isolation intensifies the feeling of outcast that Gregor has been having and this topples his remaining sense of self and belonging.

Psychological and Emotional Aspects of Alienation

Kafka also seriously explores the themes of the psychological and emotional aspects of alienation with the use of Gregor's interiority and his relation to the surrounding world. As far as the sensorial aspect is concerned, Gregor's sense of social isolation is not only tangible but also highly psychological and emotional. He has to struggle with loneliness and depression as he alienates himself from everyone including his family and becomes inhuman.

Using the example from the book, the thoughts of Gregor show how the call center employee is tormented by his inner conflict and the extent of his isolation. He laments his failure to be able to talk, and therefore be close to his family and he notes, "If they were shocked and horrified, he was shocked and horrified too" (Kafka, 1915/2008, p. 14). Both the physical conditions and the remorseless change of emotions among the members of the /family set up an irreparable breach between Gregor and the/a world; thus, his isolation continues to grow. His emotional turmoil is further highlighted when he expresses his longing for understanding and connection: In concern with the emotions – love: "He thought back on his family with deep emotion and love. If he could only forget the way they had rejected him" (Kafka, 1915/2008, p. 36). Thus, this reflection is highly emotional showing the extent of the man's isolation and the loss of relationships that cannot be repaired.

Kafka is also concerned with the shift in Gregor's disposition and his relations with the outside world as a result of his isolation. When he turns more and more into a realization of an insect, he begins devising actions which would estrange him from his family utterly. He hides under the sofa and avoids contact, reflecting his growing sense of shame and self-loathing: "To spare her this sight, Gregor hurried under the couch, with his legs scabbling all over" (Kafka, 1915/2008, p. 24). This self-estrangement is a consequence as well as a reaction to Bohemian's loneliness; it

turns into a vicious circle of loneliness and despair.

Kafka's Portrayal of Existential Alienation

Thus, Kafka does not only present Gregor's isolation on the level of family and society, but also in the existential dimension. Apparently, Kafka's "The Metamorphosis" can be viewed as an existentialist novel, as the key issues of this philosophical movement, such as absurdity of life and its lack of meaning, are revealed in the story. Gregor's metamorphosis and subsequent exclusion identify the instability of the self and the loneliness of existence.

Kafka draws out existential issues such as loneliness, ridiculousness, and the attempt to find purpose from Gregor's situation. The metamorphosis of the main character, Gregor, into an insect is unexpected and cannot be explained, which also corresponds to the concept of the absurd since it interrupts one's regular functioning in life. The absence of purpose and the crisis of identity in relation to this construct is one of the main concepts in this work. As Gregor contemplates his situation, he recognizes the futility of his existence: "He must go, cried Gregor's sister. That's the only solution, Father. You must try to get rid of the idea that this is Gregor" (Kafka, 1915/2008, p. 29). Despite this revelation of the insignificance of struggling against the current and the necessity of the protagonist's loneliness, the story conveys the feeling of hopelessness at the core of the existentialist themes.

The topics explored in Kafka's works bear existentialist themes typical to authors like Albert Camus, Jean-Paul Sartre, which entails the use of the absurd. In "The Myth of Sisyphus" the author Camus submits that life is absurd and thus people need to make meaning of it on their own, which is a narrative that is reflected in the organism's futile struggle to express his true self and gain acceptance. Thus, it is Kafka's portrayal of Gregor's isolation coupled with existential concerns raised by the novella that is enlightening when it comes to human existence in the pursuit of meaning in today's world.

Interrelation between Identity and Alienation How Gregor's Changing Identity Exacerbates His Alienation

The transformation of Gregor and, consequently, the struggle to preserve the personality and self-identification are also closely connected to the issue of alienation. Thus, as the physical appearance of the man transforms and his function in the household and society alters, the subject finds himself even more estranged. The more the physical transformation is complete and the humanity in the Tubal Cain descends, the more socially isolated his character become, too. Kafka shows this duality in Gregor's situation when he loses any possibility to share and engage within the family members. As the insect grows on him, the human personality fades away and he experiences severe problems in relating to other people. He feels more neglected and even becomes a target of his family's hostility; hence, this leads to an alienation and erasure of identity loop. This is evident in Gregor's interactions with his sister, Grete, who initially shows compassion but eventually views him as a burden: "We have to try to get rid of it. We've done everything humanly possible to look after it and to put up with it" (Kafka, 1915/2008, p. 29). This transition from empathy to rejection shows the effect of one's transformation from Gregor's position in terms of human connection and his purpose within the family.

It is critical to underscore the physical and psychological processes of dehumanization coupled with Gregor's incompetence to perform his roles as a family and social member. His metamorphosis leaves him unfit for any form of employment thus the inability to feed his family, which ultimately removes his principal source of self-esteem. This loss is poignantly reflected in his thoughts: "He was a tool of the boss, without brains or backbone. This is what he had gradually become" (Kafka, 1915/2008, p. 18). The idea that his value to the community is diminished and the consequent process of social exclusion illustrate the subjects' dependency of identity on a functional role within society and the inhumanity of its utilitarian perception.

The Impact of Alienation on Gregor's Sense of Self

A prevalent theme of alienation is evident in the way in which Gregor's existence essentially chips away at his humanity over time. Thus, having lost the care and support of his family as well as the society, Gregor starts to feel unworthy and despises himself. Kafka depicts this piteous struggle through the transformation of Gregor's thinking and actions that deteriorated into meandering and despairing.

Thus, the dehumanization of the main character's family also affects the fragmentation of his egos. And the more apathetic and repulsive they become, the more he becomes what they see him – a burdensome outcast, a freak. This internalization is evident in his reflections: "He thought back on his family with deep emotion and love. If he could only forget the way they had rejected him" (Kafka 1915/2008 36). It is therefore incumbent upon the reader to recognize that this introspective analysis speaks volumes of the heavy cost of loneliness and total devastation of the subject's personality and all social bonds.

Kafka also illustrates the consequences of loneliness that Gregor has faced through his actions and his relations with the objects in the Samsa residence. This is evident from the increased sales behavior that Gregor starts displaying as he gradually transforms to an insect; thus, wholly and completely alienating himself from his family. He hides under the sofa and avoids contact, reflecting his growing sense of shame and self-loathing: "To spare her this sight, Gregor hurried under the couch, with his legs scrabbling all over" (Kafka, 1915/2008, p 24). This kind of seclusion is a consequence of and a reaction to his isolation, thus poisoning him in a rather significant and cyclical way.

The Cyclical Nature of Identity Loss and Alienation in the Narrative

In the transformation and alienation in the Gregor Samsa's story, Kafka sees the cycle of direct dependence where one reinforces the other in the transformation of constant isolation and hopelessness. Gregor Samsa's metamorphosis starts the process of the gradual degradation of the individual's identity, which is compounded by his social isolation from his family and society. This isolation, however, leads to further disintegration

of his identity and thus attempts at his reintegration engender the process of dismantling once again.

Therefore, returning to the concept of role/cycle as both a circle and a cycle, it is possible to trace Gregor's identity loss and the feeling of alienation from his family in their daily interactions and analyze his gradual metamorphosis and change in self-perception. The more he feels isolated, the less of an individual he is, and as a result, he is unable to assert himself and gain interpersonal relationships. This is reflected in his thoughts: She continued indignantly, "He must go, cried Gregor's sister. That's the only solution, Father. You must try to get rid of the idea that this is Gregor" (Kafka, 1915/2008, p 29). The effect of the rejection reiterated by the family not only amplifies Gregor's isolation but symbolizes the annihilation of the family relationships which is very much a part of Gregor's identity.

The account of identity loss, as well as the focus on the rotation of these individuals is emphasized and supported by Kafka's symbolism and motifs. The recurring motif of the locked door, for instance, symbolizes the barriers between Gregor and his family, reflecting his growing isolation and the erosion of his identity: This was said by Kafka in his story: "Gregor tried to open the door with his mouth, but it wouldn't budge" (Kafka, 1915/2008, p. 8). In addition to the literal, physical confinement, this locked door also illuminates Gregor's psychological and emotional immurement where comradeship is impervious to his suffering and empathy is inaccessible.

Thus, one can argue that the particular novella by Kafka, "The Metamorphosis," is in fact a philosophical work that focuses on the notions of identity and isolation. Analyzing the metamorphosis of the main character Gregor Samsa and the consequent changes on his interpersonal relationships with the family members, the author depicts the multifaceted life experience and existential turmoil of a human being in a highly dehumanized world. The presence of symbolism and motifs, deep existential and psychological patterns and ideas make it a work of universal value and it corresponds with the present and modern focus concerning the human being and his isolation.

Conclusion

Summary of Key Findings

Thus, the present work has analyzed the tension between the notion of identity and the concept of alienation based on the work of Franz Kafka called "The Metamorphosis", and the main character of the story, Gregor Samsa. Logically, the choice of turning the protagonist of the novel, Gregor, into an insect stresses the main motifs of the alienation of the protagonist from everything human and society in general. Without a doubt, the main focus of the analysis indicates that through these changes, the protagonist Gregor Samsa completely undergoes a crisis of an existential nature as a result of the rejection of his relatives and the deification of the surrounding society.

Gregor struggles to keep his human personality inside the monstrous body and the abhorrent condition he transforms into shows that one can easily lose identity especially when the identity is strongly associated with social status and occupation. A failure to assimilate into society, his and his family's intolerance and hostility, and his ending signify the detrimental effects of rejection on one's well-being and place in the community. This is because the locked door, the picture of the woman in furs, and even the change of food preference of Gregor bring about a better understanding of the two approaches to power and individuality.

The role of identity concern as well as the role of refusal and alienation as elements that follow one another in cycles can be considered one of Kafka's motifs. The physical loneliness corresponds to psychological and emotional loneliness, which form a vise that results in Gregor's total withdrawal from the social world and his subsequent death. Therefore, the symbolism, the choice of the narrative perspective, and the detailed depiction of the events that take place in the story enrich the themes that Kafka addressed in "The Metamorphosis" thus making the work a deep reflection of the human experience.

Implications of the Study on Understanding Kafka's Work

Consequently, the findings of this study also provide insights toward the evaluation of Kafka are other work. Thus, by analyzing the motifs of

alienation and the transformation of identity in 'The Metamorphosis', one can discuss the essential aspects of other Kafka's major works including 'The Trial' and 'The Castle'.

With regard to the subject of identity and alienation, this present work adds another dimension to the management of existing knowledge on Kafka by presenting how closely latent in his work are those two concepts. At the same time, it underlines the need to pay attention to the psychological and existential personas of Kafka and the socio-cultural matrices that shape his probes into the human self and its isolation. Additionally, the attested controversy in this work proves that Kafka's ideas stay topical and important for modern discourse concerning the role of the human psyche and personal identity in the context of the dehumanized society of the twenty-first century. The events in *The Metamorphosis* are therefore relevant to contemporary themes of pressure to conform, the effect or economic and social roles to a person's character and the severe loneliness that results from social rejection. Kafka's work, therefore, provides important information as to the nature of human experiences; it remains relevant to literature and culture.

Final Thoughts on the Themes of Identity and Alienation

Thus, the tragedy of Gregor Samsa, narrated by Kafka in "The Metamorphosis," is still a strong and sensitive reflection on the topics of identity and isolation. Due to the ability of Kafka to capture the sufferings of the protagonist in his metamorphosis tale, the life of Gregor Samsa who transforms into an insect only to struggle to assert for its identity is symbolic of the lives of humans living in today's society. Kafka's descriptions, the choice of words, symbols, and motifs, all delineate the psychological and existential aspect of Gregor's problem.

The novella can also be read as a critique of the shallowness of interpersonal relations and how unstable the individual's identity can be if it relies on the roles which are expected to be fulfilled at any cost. Thus, an element of humanity is one of the poignant features of the story Gregor is lonely and alienated at the end, showing that dehumanization is destructive and should be

defeated with the help of genuine human emotions.

Thus, it is possible to conclude that "The Metamorphosis" is an ever-relevant work that will remain to engage readers and scholars for decades. Kafka's works are fundamental to the study of identity and alienation in the twentieth century, thus, the interpretation of Kafka's art demands a serious reflection on the problems of modern society. Consequently, this study does help to achieve the goals set, aiding in the continual understanding and analysis of Kafka's work and the importance of his themes relevant to today's identity and existentialist crises.

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